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Honduran Security/Intelligence Service Involvement in Human Rights Incidents

Some officers reported that it was common knowledge that the 316th Battalion--and other [redacted] units--committed abuses, but other officers said they recall having no concerns that [redacted] was involved in any human rights violations. Such inconsistencies in responses are disturbing. They raise rather than answer questions. The responses also cause the Working Group to wonder how so many [redacted] officers could know about the bad human rights reputations of [redacted] and fail to gather information and report on [redacted] practices--good or bad.

The Respondents -- How Forthcoming Were They?

The information respondents provided was extremely limited. Most of the respondents [redacted] said they had little memory of what happened related to human rights issues there.

The notion that so many people recall so little about such important issues raises questions about whether additional information is being withheld. The Working Group does not know whether this is intentional or because it did not ask the right questions or perhaps people who would have better memories.

What Did the Working Group Learn?

Even though most respondents did not provide much detail on security/intelligence service involvement in human rights abuses, some important information emerged.

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Other information the respondents offered appears problematic in places:

- No one [redacted] reported observing or hearing of any abuses that they did not report. Nonetheless, [redacted] did not report it.
- Some [redacted] officers had concerns about [redacted] engaging in abuses, but reported that they could provide no specific evidence of such abuses.

Respondents made several interesting comments relative to the 316th Battalion:

- Some officers noted that it was common knowledge that the 316th Battalion committed human rights abuses in the 1980s [redacted]
- Another officer reported that the 316th Battalion was created for the explicit purpose of [redacted] a unit under rigorous and effective military command and control. The written record indicates the Hondurans, [redacted] formed the 316th because the Special Unit of FUSEP was not performing its mission effectively.
- One respondent reported new information that several Honduran leftists captured with Salvadoran insurgent leader Montenegro in 1983 apparently disappeared after the 316th Battalion had taken custody of them. The 316th was created in January 1984. The respondent may have been off on his date or the unit he was talking about could have been the FUSEP Special Unit, the forerunner of the 316th.
- Another officer wrote that in the mid-1980s then DDO, Dick Stoltz, questioned him several times in private about the 316th and its reputation. This private approach directly to an officer rather than through [redacted] management suggests that Headquarters had concerns that [redacted] might not have been fully reporting what it knew [redacted]
- Finally, one respondent reported that the allegations [redacted] were "in major part a perception management operation by the Cubans/Sandinistas." Such a possibility has

been raised before--most notably to Congress during the late 1980s--but the Working Group discovered no specific evidence of such an operation nor did the respondent provide any specific details to support his assertion.

DI respondents provided little new, but one analyst wrote that he and other analysts felt that reporting on human rights abuses was inadequate and that collectors were not digging as deeply as they might have.

What Gaps Remain?

Serious gaps remain relative to the question of [redacted] human rights abuses. In particular:

- [redacted] why did they discover nothing about alleged human rights abuses--either to prove or disprove them?
- How could [redacted] have followed up on [redacted] ELACH-- pursuing additional leads--if no one other than a few people report knowing of its existence? If [redacted] asked [redacted] for information on ELACH, why can they remember nothing about it? The ELACH reports were deemed sufficiently important to notify to Congress about, but [redacted] officers can provide no additional information about what they did to pursue leads on ELACH? Why do they not remember?
[redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- How can it be common knowledge that the 316th Battalion committed abuses in the 1980s, but none of the respondents, [redacted] had memories or specifics?

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- Were some Honduran officers transferred out of either the 316th Battalion or the CI Division in the mid-1980s because they had committed abuses? Does this have any connection to the ELACH reporting? Why do only a few [redacted] officers remember this information?

- If ELACH had contacts in the 316th, why did [redacted]
[redacted] not find out about the abuses?
[redacted]

- It is not clear if and how [redacted]
[redacted] was involved in the ELACH incident.
[redacted]

- What did reports officers who served in the 1980s know about the human rights situation? According to one officer, any information on human rights abuses was to be provided in a written report to [redacted] who would coordinate it
[redacted] for dissemination.
[redacted]